

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 06899 101420Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
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R 101247Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7175
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

UNCLAS ATHENS 6899

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, AL, GR
SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL RELATIONS: ALBANIANS TO COMPETE IN
BALKAN GAMES

1. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1964 THERE WILL BE AN ALBANIAN
CONTINGENT PARTICIPATING IN THE BALKAN GAMES. SEVERAL MONTHS
AGO, ACCORDING TO NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS, THE ALBANIANS HAD
REQUESTED DETAILS CONCERNING PARTICIPATION FROM THE GREEK
ORGANIZERS OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH BALKAN GAMES, WHICH BEGIN THIS
WEEKEND IN THESSALONIKI. SEVERAL FOLLOW-UP INQUIRIES WERE THEN
SENT BY THE ORGANIZERS WITHOUT ANY REPLY FROM TIRANA. SCARCELY
THREE DAYS BEFORE THE GAMES WERE TO BEGIN, HOWEVER, THE ALBANIAN
TEAM, CONSISTING OF SEVEN MALE AND TWO FEMALE ATHLETES, TWO
COACHES, ONE "ESCORT" AND A HEAD OF DELEGATION, SUDDENLY ARRIVED
IN THESSALONIKI. THEY WILL JOIN TEAMS FROM BULGARIA,
GREECE, ROMANIA, TURKEY AND YUGOSLAVIA.

2. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS ONLY THE SIXTH TIME THAT
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ALBANIA EVER COMPETED IN THE BALKAN GAMES. (APPARENTLY
PRIOR TO 1964 ALBANIA HAD COMPETED FOUR TIMES IN THE THIRTIES).
THIS FACT ILLUMINATES THE GESTURE FURTHER AS A SMALL STEP
AWAY FROM ALBANIA'S ISOLATION. IT HAS NOT, HOWEVER AFFECTED
THE BETTING ODDS ON THE VARIOUS TRACK AND FIELD EVENTS -- FOR
WE NOTE THAT ALBANIA HAS FINISHED IN LAST PLACE IN FOUR OF HER
FIVE PREVIOUS APPEARANCES IN THE BALKAN GAMES.

MCCLOSKEY

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